

retreat from Iraq. Ironically, while the terrorists are preparing for what they hope will be a premature U.S. retreat, we are making real, tough, step-by-step progress, highlighted with the recent killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

But of all things, in a paradox of enormous consequence and irony, we stand here today debating this withdrawal commensurate with the predicted retreat by al-Zarqawi and his terrorist associates.

Now is not the time to abandon our momentum and retreat. Such a retreat would do more than encourage the bin Ladens of the world. Jihadist terrorist cells throughout the world, and in our own country, would be rethinking their attack plans with ominous repercussions.

Let us not ignore the very nature of our adversaries. Senator ALLEN spoke to that. They think of us as dust. We have no human value. And they are not giving up. They are planning attacks as we speak—everybody knows that—within the U.S. Capitol. Imagine how such a withdrawal would be viewed in places like Iran, in the midst of aggressively building up its nuclear capacity; North Korea, with its existing capacity; China, with its continued military expansion, the greatest since World War II; and Russia, where we are now witnessing a return to totalitarianism round II, especially with Ukrainian democracy; and Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez has become the next Castro.

Imagine what doubts the lack of resolve would really create in the minds of our allies now working with us with unprecedented intelligence cooperation, and the impact on the progress we have made in Pakistan and Afghanistan, leading to a radical Islamic takeover of the Mushariff and Karzi governments and further leading to increased threats within the next terrorist nerve centers in Indonesia and Africa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 4 minutes.

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, what is the time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fourteen minutes and 40 seconds.

Mr. WARNER. I will yield the 2 minutes, and then the two other colleagues can divide equally the time that is remaining.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, this amendment has consequences to our allies, including Libya, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, even Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Basically, this amendment has consequences, introducing it on the floor of the Senate has consequences, debating it has consequences, and voting for it has consequences.

I am going to close by calling to mind a lesson of historical precedent. Upon learning of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Sir Winston Churchill said this:

Silly people; that was the description many gave in discounting the force of the United States. Some said they were soft,

others that they would never be united, that they would never come to grips. They would never stand for bloodletting, that their system of government and democracy would paralyze their effort.

Now we will see the weakness of this numerous but remote, wealthy and talkative people. But, American blood flows in my veins. I thought of a remark made to me years before—the United States is like a gigantic boiler. Once the fire of freedom is lighted under it, there is no limit to the power it can generate. It is a matter of resolve.

I say to my colleagues that, if approved, this amendment could, in a matter of minutes, undo that resolve now, and for the next generation who will face new threats to our way of life. Setting an artificial timetable will send the wrong message to the Iraqi's, who need to know that America will not leave before the job is done, and our troops, who must know that we are serious about the mission that they are risking their lives to achieve.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want the same thing all Americans do, for our troops to complete their mission in Iraq and return home safely and quickly. To accomplish that, the President must define what our current mission is and how that mission serves our Nation's security interests.

The men and women of our military have done everything we have asked them to do. They looked for weapons of mass destruction and found none. We got rid of Saddam Hussein. We helped the Iraqis hold elections and set up their government and security forces. So what is our mission today?

Right now, our Nation's policy on Iraq is adrift. Instead of addressing this head on, the administration and this Congress continue to build on the miscalculation and incompetence of the past and are dismissing any serious discussion of the challenge the American people now face.

Instead of working to unite this Nation behind a common purpose in defense of our security and freedom, the President and his aides are using the war as political fodder for the next election cycle. Instead of being honest with the American people about the costs of our effort and the sacrifice necessary to support them, the Congress continues to hand a blank check to the administration to continue the status quo. That approach has left us with heated rhetoric and a long series of bad choices.

True security for the American people depends on an honest assessment of the threats we face, a very clear mission, and an honest discussion about the costs of confronting those threats.

On Iraq we do not have any of those components. Continuing the status quo is unacceptable. We need the President

to tell us what the mission in Iraq is so we, as Congress and as a country, can decide if it is worth the continued price we are paying.

Like all of us, I want the troops home as soon as possible. In fact, I think they should start coming home this year. It is absolutely time for a new strategy in Iraq. An arbitrary, specific date for full withdrawal, however, could force us to ignore facts on the ground, facts that have a direct impact on the security of our troops or the interests of our Nation. I appreciate those who ask for a date certain. I, too, am frustrated with where we find ourselves today. But what we do need is change. What we do need is leadership. What we do need is a defined mission. And what we do need is a plan for success.

The troops on the ground, as well as the American people, deserve an honest discussion and a plan for victory and a goal to achieve that. That is why I support the Levin amendment.

This administration, this Congress, and this Nation should be focused like a laser on how we can be successful and bring our troops home safely. Our troops and the American people deserve a plan that brings us all together to accomplish that goal.

I yield my remaining time.

Mr. WARNER. What is the time remaining on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There remains 13 minutes 2 seconds.

Mr. WARNER. I am going to relinquish the time I hoped to use to do wrapup remarks and divide it equally between the Senator from Missouri and the Senator from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized for 6 minutes 30 seconds.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the floor manager of the bill. As we have heard, the end of al-Zarqawi is a significant blow to al-Qaida operations in Iraq. It is another clear indication of the progress we are making. In addition, the documents we captured at that time indicate that the al-Qaida terrorists themselves know that we are making progress. They are worried that time is now on our side. They know they cannot withstand our military forces.

But even before our troops eliminated one of America's fiercest enemies, some at home had described the current situation in Iraq as bleak. Now they are introducing measures for a timetable for withdrawal from the region.

The insurgents will no doubt consider the debating of this measure one of the best pieces of news they have had this year. That is because the terrorists know that time is on our side unless we give them a timetable for withdrawal. We know that a timetable for withdrawal will undercut the momentum that the insurgents themselves say we have gained in Iraq.

As I have talked to our troops who have been in the field, they say, doesn't